



The Reader

SOUTH DAKOTA USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT'S NEWSLETTER

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Bowdle is known for the tallest water tower in South Dakota.
- South Dakota is the home of the Dakota, Lakota and Nakota tribes, which make up the Sioux Nation.
- Belle Fourche is the geographical center of the United States of America, designated in 1959 and noted by an official marker and sheepherder's monument called a "Stone Johnnie".
- The Flaming Fountain on South Dakota State Capitol Lake is fed by an artesian well with natural gas content so high that it can be lit. The fountain glows perpetually as a memorial to all veterans.

FARM BILL FORUM

Huron—Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr hosted a Farm Bill Listening Session on Wednesday, September 7, 2005 at the South Dakota State Fair in Huron from 12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m. The forum was part of a nationwide tour aimed at gaining public input that will be useful in preparing for a new farm bill. The public was invited to respond to one or more of the following six questions:

1. How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?
2. How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to effectively compete in global markets?
3. How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?
4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?
5. How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?
6. How should agricultural product development, marketing and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill?

Everyone can comment on the new farm bill until December 30, 2005. The farm bill forum website is <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>.



Pictured above at left—left to right: Rural Development State Director Lynn D. Jensen, Natural Resource Conservation Service State Conservationist Janet L. Oertly, Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr (Washington, DC), and Farm Service Agency State Executive Director Steven K. Cutler. Pictured at center is South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture Larry Gabriel and Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr. Pictured at right is the Moderator Michelle Rook (WNAX-FM) and Under Secretary Thomas Dorr.

AGRI-ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD

Hartford—Noelle Rist, West Central High School student and an active member of the West Central FFA Chapter was named the South Dakota Agri Entrepreneurship winner for 2005. USDA

Rural Development in South Dakota recognizes the Future Farmers of America (FFA) as a leader in supporting the development of rural youth. This year, USDA Rural Development sponsored

the FFA's prestigious Agri-Entrepreneurship Award Program. This program inspires young people to explore careers in agricultural business and industry. They challenge students to hone

AGRI ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD (CONTINUED)

real-world entrepreneurial skills, identify specific business opportunities, and develop detailed business plans. They help participants build the skills—technical and interpersonal—required for business success. They grow leaders. Noelle received \$1,000 for her Agri-Entrepreneurship project, Willow Creek Produce and Nursery. The project focuses on wildlife management and

organically grown fruits and vegetables and a nursery for landscape trees.



Pictured at left—Under Secretary Thomas Dorr and Agri-Entrepreneurship winner Noelle Rist. Pictured above—left to right: Under Secretary Thomas Dorr, State Director Lynn D. Jensen and Noelle Rist.



Under Secretary Thomas Dorr congratulating Noelle Rist.

RED RIBBON CAMPAIGN

Letcher—USDA Rural Development Acting State Director Les Boehmer presented April Byrd with a plaque, along with an embossed water bottle and other prizes for her winning essay. April and her family live in the Letcher Villas Apartments in Letcher, South Dakota. April outlined in her essay ten steps on how ‘You should always be safe at home!’ USDA Rural Development sponsored a Red Rib-

bon Campaign titled Safe At Home. The campaign is designed to make children more aware of the dangers of crime and drugs in their neighborhood. The contest was open to youth ages 5–14 who lived in financed multi-family complexes. The contest was open from June 15, 2005–September 1, 2005. Acting State Director Les Boehmer said, “April did an excellent job in providing

details and description in her outline. We thank April for entering and congratulate her on submitting the successful entry.” A party was attended by family, friends and USDA Rural Development staff on October 13, 2005. Cookies, bars, coffee and punch were served to the guests. USDA Rural Development has 487 financed multi-family complexes in the state, serving 6,800 households.

“April did an excellent job in providing details and description in her outline.”

- Les Boehmer -



Pictured above is April Byrd holding her plaque.

COOPERATIVE EFFORT MAKES HOMEOWNERSHIP A REALITY

Eagle Butte—Jeannette and Dansyl Two Crows applied for assistance from USDA Rural Development’s Single Family Housing 502 direct loan program. They are a young family with two children living in rented house outside of town near Eagle Butte. Their application for assistance became the first cooperative effort to

provide home ownership for a family through assistance from both the USDA Rural Development 502 program and the Cheyenne River Housing Authority. It took almost two years for the Two Crows to obtain all the necessary supporting documents and permission from the Tribal Council. During the

Pictured at right – left to right: Kimberly Claymore of Cheyenne River Housing Authority; Dansyl Two Crows, Jeanette Two Crows, and Roxee Holloway – Cheyenne River Housing Authority Board of Commissioners Chairperson; pictured from left to right – back row: USDA Rural Development Specialist Paula Corcoran, Lauren Ganje – Inspector for Cheyenne River Housing Authority, and Rebecca Kidder – Tribal Attorney.



COOPERATIVE EFFORT (CONTINUED)

two years, they had a third child, they were forced to move out of the rental house they were living in due to a sale by the owner, they lived for months with various family members and friends and they worked diligently to complete the application process. The couple succeeded in being their own advocates with the Tribal Council and obtaining the required permission in a much shorter

time period than usual based upon their own initiative and effort. "It's a long process but worth the wait when you do get to move in," according to Jeannette Two Crows. The Two Crows moved into their own home at Fox Ridge just east of Eagle Butte in early June 2005. Fox Ridge is a development created by the Cheyenne River Housing Authority and the Two Crows were the first family to move



Pictured above is the Two Crows new house.

into the development. The USDA Rural Development 502 home loan program is an assistance program offered to low-income families meeting income-eligibility requirements. The houses in Fox Ridge all have four bedrooms and a total square footage of 1,568. All the houses are to be sold to people who will actually be living in the homes, not as rental properties. "The payments we are making go towards something that is ours and a place that we can call home," said Jeannette Two Crows.

HOME REPAIRS

Watertown—The Livocks moved to South Dakota in 1995 and bought their home in 2001. Two weeks after moving in, John lost his job, so they were not able to make the repairs they had planned on doing. Later that same year, Jane was diagnosed with cancer, so house repairs were again put on hold. The first winter in the house, with a high fuel bill—caused in part by bad windows—convinced them of the need to replace the windows. And each year they had to paint the house because the siding wouldn't hold the paint. Since John had retired and being on a fixed income, the family struggled to save enough money to make the repairs. That is when Jane found the poster on self help rehab. The self help rehab program is a pilot project of USDA Rural Development in

South Dakota in which low-income families make needed repairs to their homes by doing the work themselves or with the help of family and friends. USDA Rural Development awarded a technical assistance grant to Interlakes Community Action (ICAP) in October of 2004 to administer the program over a seven county area in southeastern South Dakota. ICAP markets the program, assesses the repairs needed, and assists the family in getting bids. Then a project supervisor teaches the family the necessary skills to make the repairs and supervises the project to make sure the work is being completed. Using the rural home repair (504) loan/grant program, USDA Rural Development also finances the materials and any sub-contract labor, such as an

electrician or plumber. With either a 1% interest loan, or a grant for elderly applicants, the repairs are affordable for low-income families. When asked about the experience, Jane said, "We had fun doing it and enjoy the results." In fact John and Jane have discussed helping an elderly man in the next town who doesn't have close relatives to help him. Their pay? If he makes the coffee, we'll be glad to help. It's the neighborly thing to do.

**"We had fun
doing it and
enjoy the
results."**

- Jane Livock -

Pictured at right is Jane and John Livock in front of their home.



We are on the web!

www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd

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THOUGHTS FROM USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT STATE DIRECTOR LYNN D. JENSEN

Huron—Now that Fiscal Year 2005 is behind us, we can reflect on just how successful it really was. For me it was a busy year until the end, but extremely rewarding. As I traveled around the state promoting USDA Rural Development, I have come to realize more and more how important USDA Rural Development is to people's lives. "Committed to the future of rural communities" is more than a slogan, it truly reflects what we do. USDA Rural Development continues to build relationships among

agencies, communities and individuals. South Dakota Rural Development supports rural communities, individuals and businesses by creating jobs, developing business and providing clean drinking water and community and technology infrastructure through loans and grants. 2005 was a year of achievement for South Dakota USDA Rural Development. We have delivered over \$108 million in housing programs, \$22 million in community programs, and \$72 million in rural business/cooperative

programs. More than 2,703 families have been served, 51 facilities upgraded/built, 1,503 jobs created and 160 jobs saved in Fiscal year 2005. In addition, USDA Rural Development has held 51 check presentation events throughout South Dakota. Enclosed with this newsletter is a copy of the spreadsheet that reflects program funding activity from Fiscal Year 1995–2005. If you would like more information about our programs, visit our web site at www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd or call (605) 352-1100.



Lynn D. Jensen

State Director Jensen has been detailed to lead an effort to assess, understand, coordinate, and optimize several Federal, State, Local Government, and local organizations in the Baton Rouge, Louisiana area. The duration of his detail is unknown at this time. During State Director Jensen's absence, Area Director Les Boehmer has been appointed as the interim Acting State Director.